

On the Road

THE RELIEF ROUTE — SR 1

Issue 13

DELAWARE ROUTE 7 TO US ROUTE 113

Spring 1993

FHWA GRANTS FINAL DESIGN APPROVAL

The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) recently obtained design approval from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for the Odessa/Townsend Segment of SR 1. DelDOT can now proceed with final design and pursue the necessary federal and state environmental permits required for construction. Final design should be completed in 1995.

Since the February 1992 Design Public Hearing, final refinements to the preferred alignment were made as part of the design-approval process. Some adjustments were made in response to community input at the public hearing and others were made for environmental reasons.

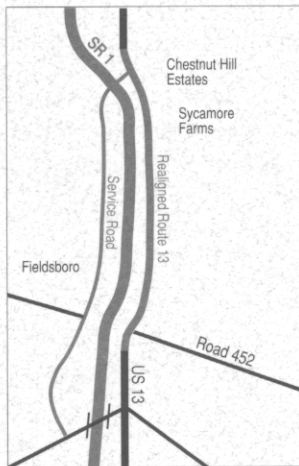
The community has played a key role in helping DelDOT find the best alignment for SR 1 within the 1987-approved corridor. At public workshops and the design public hearing, area residents and businesses gave valuable information, allowing DelDOT to find the alignment which best balances community concerns with environmental considerations.

In order to best accommodate residents near the interchange at Route 299, the ramp design was changed to a full diamond configuration. This configuration features straight on- and off-ramps on both the north and south sides of Route 299. Since this type of interchange requires less land, there is more room for landscape screening.

South of the Appoquinimink Creek, near Sycamore Farms and Chestnut Hill, the alignment was moved to satisfy community concerns. Instead of locating SR 1 *between* those communities and US 13 as originally proposed, SR 1 will move west to use part of what is now the US 13 alignment. In turn, US 13 will be reconstructed east of SR 1 from Fieldsboro to the Appoquinimink Creek. A two-lane service road will provide access to properties currently located on the west side of US 13.

Several alignment shifts reduce impacts on wetlands, an important environmental resource for several reasons. Wetlands provide a home and food to a wide variety of animal life, both native and migratory. They perform a crucial role for people by absorbing excess water in times of heavy rains.

Federal regulations protect wetlands, so DelDOT must conduct careful studies in areas where SR 1 crosses them. DelDOT must first demonstrate that it



The final FHWA approved alignment as it will be built near Sycamore Farms in the portion from just south of the Appoquinimink Creek to Pine Tree Corners. The SR 1 right-of-way will occupy part of what is now US 13. A new US13 will be built east of its present location. A service road on the west side of SR 1 will provide access to US 13.

has made its best effort to avoid wetlands. If they cannot be avoided, DelDOT must then show that the preferred design represents its best effort to minimize the effect. Early review and involvement of state and federal wetland regulatory agencies has helped DelDOT to make informed decisions on final road placement. Three major changes were made:

- Near Smyrna Landing Road (Road 485), SR 1 was shifted west in order to minimize the bisection of a wetland. This shift will allow a more continuous wetland system, an important consideration since fish and fowl benefit from having a larger, connected habitat.
- Near Drawers Creek, the alignment was moved to accommodate different wetland inhabitants. Over forty enormous, ancient lowland trees have been avoided, some so large two people could not join hands around them!
- At the request of Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), DelDOT modified the alignment at the Sandom Branch only to the degree which would allow the eastern-most edge of SR 1's right-of-way to be maintained. This shift will preserve the existing boundary of DNREC's Upper Blackbird Creek Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve (DNERR).

DelDOT has successfully worked with individuals and agencies to build consensus for cost-effective, environmentally sensitive alternatives. FHWA design approval makes the next step in the SR 1 construction process possible for the Odessa/Townsend Segment. ■



Delaware Department of
Transportation

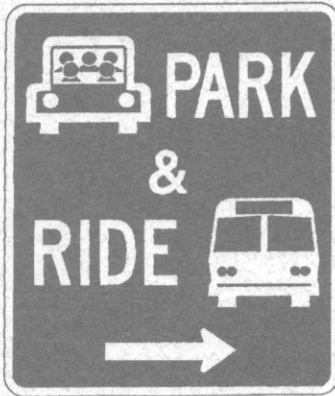
Anne P. Canby
Secretary

On the Road is published periodically by the Delaware Department of Transportation and is the official newsletter of SR 1, the US Route 13 Relief Route.

ATTENTION DOVER-AREA RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

Notices of the Design Public Hearing for the Puncheon Run segment scheduled for July 7, 1993 will appear in newspapers in June and will be sent to people on the SR 1 mailing list. *On the Road* recipients are requested to submit names and addresses of friends and neighbors interested in joining the mailing list to:

On the Road
c/o KFS, Inc.
219 N. Broad Street
9th Floor
Phila., PA 19107



Signs, like the one above, will be located along SR 1 and side roads to direct commuters to park and ride lots.

• **PARK AND RIDE LOTS: Better alternatives for commuters**

DelDOT expects park and ride lots to be an essential component of transit services envisioned for the SR 1 corridor. With express bus service between Wilmington and Dover provided by the Blue Diamond Express and stepped-up van and car pooling programs, park and ride lots are a necessity.

DelDOT recently initiated this latest phase in a study to evaluate potential locations and develop site designs for park and ride lots along SR 1 between Tybouts Corner and Dover Air Force Base. Concerns which helped shape the Relief Route will be considered in this effort, including the effects the lots might have on nearby communities and such resources as wetlands and historic properties. Critical to the choice of locations is convenient access for both autos and express buses. Lots will be located near interchanges where the potential to intercept SR 1-bound commuters is greatest. Park and Ride lots will incorporate the latest design innovations, such as express bus ramps, to provide commuters with efficient and attractive alternatives to driving themselves. ■

TO OUR READERS:

The State of Delaware and the consultant team are committed to continuing the citizen-input process during the design and construction phases of the project. We invite you to write us with questions or comments regarding *On the Road* or to arrange for a presentation to bring your group up to date on the Relief Route. To receive your free copy of *On the Road* as well as other mailings related to the project, please write or call us with your request.

CONTACT DelDOT

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- Public Information: contact Michele Ackles, Manager of Public Relations, at 302-739-4313
- Design Issues: contact David DuPlessis, Project Manager, at 302-739-3834
- Environmental Issues: contact Joe Wutka, Location Studies Engineer, at 302-739-4642
- Right-of-Way Acquisition and Relocation: contact Ira White, Project Acquisitions Manager, at 302-739-2776

Or CONTACT THE CONSULTANT TEAM

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- Project Manager: Susan F. Gibbons
- Newsletter: Sheri Sanzone, Editor, and Nancy O'Donnell, Project Planner

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